

## On Humans: A Primer (Mandatory reading for all Galactic Federation Personnel)

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To His Excellency, High Chancellor Zavakavari,

Sir,

*As per your instructions in our last correspondence, I have put all my energies and those of my staff into compiling a useful yet suitably brief overview on the newest species we have welcomed into the fold of our star-spanning union. We agreed at the time that this document was urgently needed, as the transition of the Terran species calling itself "humans" has not been easy, for them or for us. As of this writing, recent events such as the Great Food Fight on Urriax IV and the ambush of Senior Diplomat Fey'ka on Wyvern Station by human "teenagers" armed with highly-pressurized water weapons only further illustrate that Federation personnel must be better-informed and better-prepared to deal with human...eccentricities.*

*This task, however, was not as easy as it first appeared, for humans by their very nature defy broad classification. If you take two humans and put them side by side, it is almost certain that both of them will react differently to similar situations and social stimuli. Thus, I must caution that while the guidelines below will prove useful in most scenarios, I cannot guarantee 100 percent effectiveness. Each soldier, sailor and citizen of our Federation must be encouraged to supplement this guide with their own judgment.*

*What follows are several excerpts of the final product, which was compiled from multiple sources, including but not limited to eyewitness accounts, field reports, and of course historical and cultural treatises written by the humans themselves. Their propensity for literary production--which I must say is quite remarkable, even by our standards--ensured that these materials were available in vast quantities. I took the liberty of ordering a number of these works translated into Galactic Standard Basic for the further edification of our citizenry, and will be happy to furnish you with some advance copies if you so desire (these are hardbound books, I hasten to add--a bit old-fashioned, but there is a certain novelty to them that I find appealing).*

*It is my hope that the information contained herein proves useful in furthering mutual understanding between ourselves and our new human friends, and in so doing uphold and strengthen the principles of peaceful coexistence and cooperation that have guided our Galactic Federation for so many thousands of years.*

Respectfully,

Grand Admiral Helios Drang, Commander-in-Chief of the Galactic Federation Navy

## ON HUMANS: A PRIMER, 1st Ed.

*Written in this the five-thousandth eight-hundredth and ninety-sixth year of the Galactic Federation, by order of the Office of the High Chancellor for immediate distribution.*

### Part One: Common Situations, or What To Expect When Meeting Humans For the First Time

As our Federation continues its endless journey across the interstellar void, we continue to come into contact with civilizations of every imaginable variety. Some will be good friends and neighbors, others valued trading partners, but many more will choose to join our ranks as the newest members of our great and ever-expanding union. It is always a moment of celebration when we citizens welcome new members into our ranks, but some species are easier to adjust to than others. Species 112-56A, henceforth referred to as "humans" are an excellent example of this. You have undoubtedly heard of several high-profile incidents that have arisen as a result of lack of understanding of human customs and cultural norms. This primer aims to further your understanding of both, in the hope that if and when you encounter a human or group of humans yourself, you will be adequately prepared.

The issue of human culture, values and social norms is a thorny one. For most of their recorded history they were not a united race and, after their initial diaspora from the landmass called "Africa," they divided--first into countless myriad tribes, and then into nation-states of increasing size, complexity and sophistication, all of which had different religious beliefs, moral values, and cultural practices (for a full cartographic depiction of the human homeworld, see Figure A, Section I, Subsection III in the index). As you probably already suspect, this means that human history is marred by internecine conflict. This is of course a tragedy, but it has also given rise to a strong martial history that will make human recruits a valuable addition to our Federation's armed services. You will learn more details about human culture later on in this primer, but for now, let us begin by giving some examples of what to do--and not to do--if you find yourself in human company.

1. Do not be frightened if a human shows his or her teeth at you (See Fig. B.). This is called "smiling" and it is meant to be indicate friendliness and amicability. It is not an indication that a human wants to consume you for sustenance.
2. Do not be alarmed if a human is accompanied by a smaller, less intelligent organism. These are called "pets" and humans keep them for amusement. Some of these pets, including the native Terran animals collectively called "dogs," may begin to make loud noises and jump up and down repeatedly upon seeing you. Do not be alarmed if this is the case--this is called "barking" and happens often. According to data provided by the Greater Institute of Xenos Studies, dogs can and often do bark at anything and everything.
3. Do not attempt to touch a dog or any other pet without asking. Dogs are descended from a Terran apex predator called "wolves" (See Fig. B below) that humans domesticated long ago. Dogs quite often are very friendly, but they retain the

sharp teeth of their ancestors can cause serious injury if provoked. The same is true of "cats," which are armed with retractable claws carried at the end of each limb.

4. Humans keep a wide variety of native Terran animals as pets. These range from cold-blooded reptilians to multi-limbed insectoids and come in countless shapes and sizes. All of these fall under rule #3.
5. Do NOT, under any circumstances whatsoever, attempt to kick, insult or otherwise mistreat any creature claimed as a "pet" by a human. To do so is to invite immediate and grievous bodily harm from the human in question and any other humans in the immediate vicinity.
6. A human may also be accompanied by a smaller human. These are human offspring in the early stage of development, known collectively as children. Do not be alarmed if children attempt to touch you or ask you bizarre questions. This is all very normal, as human children take time to develop any great sense of self-awareness or tact.
7. Do NOT do anything that may make yourself appear threatening or frightening to the child in any way. This rule is broken at the very peril of your own life, for humans have only one rule when it comes to protecting their offspring: any threat, real or perceived, is neutralized as quickly and violently as possible, often in a public place so as to send a warning to others.
8. Humans can be very protective and territorial of any space or item that they claim as their own. Do NOT, under any circumstances, take or use anything claimed as property by a human without first asking permission. Failing to do so can provoke a wide range of reactions ranging from mild irritation to outright violence. This warning is especially relevant for army and navy personnel who may be bunking or serving alongside humans.
9. Humans often drink or otherwise imbibe stimulant substances for pleasure. Most of these substances produce only mild effects on humans but can have widely varying results when ingested by other Federation species. A Zarellian who ingested the substance known as "coffee" was observed to stay awake for an entire standard week before finally collapsing (he eventually recovered). If you are offered a cup of coffee, you ingest it at your own risk.
10. Humans often emit a loud, ululating sound when they are highly amused. This is called laughter and, while it may look like the human is having some sort of paroxysm, is completely natural and even healthy. If you are of a species with sensitive auditory receptors, you may want to carry muffling devices on your person.
11. Humans' sense of humor ranges from bizarre to downright horrifying. If a human asks if you want to hear a "dead baby joke," you are strongly advised to politely decline.
12. Humans are extremely curious, sometimes at the expense of their own sense of self-preservation. You must be prepared to do your best to ensure that your human does not injure him- or herself in their haste to satisfy their curiosity about something. This is especially true for those of you working with humans in the Archaeological or Cartographic Society, as you will likely be working with humans to uncover ancient ruins of lost galactic civilizations or charting unexplored star systems. Both of these will provide ample opportunity for humans' curiosity to get the better of them. In particular, take care

to make sure your human colleague does not lift any stone idols or ancient artifacts from raised pedestals, pull any mysterious levers or press any brightly colored buttons.

13. Humans are easily distracted, especially by anything they deem "cute" or "fluffy." If you are of the Ursulid species, be prepared to be called a "giant teddy bear" and hugged repeatedly. There is, apparently, no way for humans to suppress this reaction.
14. Due to their history of conflict and strife, humans often play at war. Therefore, do not be alarmed if you are invited to a game of "laser tag" or a "Nerf gun fight." These are only games, not military engagements.
15. If a human asks you to pull their finger, do not engage, particularly if you are in an enclosed space like a turbo-lift or a cockpit.

These are only a few examples of what to keep in mind when you begin interacting with humans, whether in a professional or personal capacity. In the next section, you will learn more about the human homeworld and what to expect there.